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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Letter dated 4 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China adopted on the occasion of the twentieth annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 27 September 1996 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would highly appreciate if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 12, 21, 33, 35, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 55, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 112, 114, 115, 119 and 120.

(Signed) Fernando BERROCAL-SOTO
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Costa Rica to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77
New York

ANNEX

Declaration adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China at their twentieth annual meeting held in New York on 27 September 1996

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

1. The Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China was held in New York on 27 September 1996.

2. The Ministers underlined the emergence of the Group of 77 and China as a major force in world affairs and its constructive contributions over the past three decades to development and international economic cooperation. The Ministers reiterated the need for increasing cooperation within the Group of 77 and China to define mid-term and long-term strategies to further mobilize collective strength through well coordinated positions and approaches with a view to safeguarding the overall interests of developing countries, and enhancing the Group's joint negotiating capacity on all major development issues in the U.N. system, recognizing that developing countries, as a whole, are still confronted with many shared and common problems and challenges flowing from the deepening interdependence among nations and accelerated globalization of the world economy.

3. The Ministers expressed their firm commitment to the continuing validity and relevance of the objectives and principles of the Group of 77 and China. They reaffirmed their resolve to pursue the objectives and principles contained in the joint Declaration adopted by the Special Ministerial Meeting commemorating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Group of 77 held in New York on 24 June 1994.

4. In reviewing developments in the world economic scene, the Ministers recognized the importance, inter-alia, for world economic growth and expansion of trade, of the economic progress made by a number of members of the Group and the increased importance of the Group in world economic affairs. At the same time, they expressed concern that other members of the Group continue to face severe difficulties and experience sluggish or even negative economic growth. They stressed the urgency and importance of heightened international support for the developing countries, particularly the African, and the least developed countries, in order to broaden their opportunities for growth and development.

5. The Ministers stressed that the processes of globalization and liberalization bring challenges and opportunities which affect virtually all countries, but in strikingly different ways. Benefits in some countries contrast with instability and marginalization in others, particularly in developing countries. Such an uneven trend requires renewed partnership and the fulfillment of international cooperation commitments in order for developing countries to effectively benefit from the process of globalization and liberalization. This process must be managed on the basis of principles of non discrimination and avoidance of measures and unfair competitive advantage as well as the recognition to the need for safeguard and preferential treatments of developing countries.

6. The Ministers reiterated their concern that the special needs and vulnerabilities of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) continue to create barriers for these countries to effectively participate in a rapidly globalizing world economy. The Barbados Programme of Action, should be considered in this regard as a most comprehensive tool for the international community to address this and other serious problems facing SIDS. The Ministers expressed concern that, although great efforts have been undertaken by SIDS at the national level, there has not been commesurate support at the international level. They renewed their call for a strengthening of efforts at the international level in the implementation and follow-up of the Barbados Programme of Action.

7. The Ministers called on the international community to give special attention and support to address the special development problems and needs of the Land-locked developing countries, particularly through technical cooperation with and provision of financial assistance by developed countries, and multilateral financial institutions to enable these countries to effectively participate in a rapidly globalizing world economy. In this regard, the Ministers further recognized that transit developing countries faced serious economic problems and that their efforts at developing a viable transit infrastructure also needed financial and technical support from the international community.

8. The Ministers urged the international community, particularly the developed countries, to foster an equitable and favourable international economic and financial environment in order to help eradicate poverty, promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries, through the elimination of trade barriers and restrictions to market access, increasing and improving the quality of Official Development Assistance, encouraging and supporting the flow of investment and appropriate technologies to developing countries and improving their access to capital from international financial institutions and commercial sources.

9. The Ministers expressed concern over the widening gap between the developed and developing countries and the continued uncertain prospects of global economic recovery and its consequences for developing countries. They stressed the need for concerted multilateral action to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Charter, both in resolving economic and social problems as well as in promoting peace and security. To this end, they called for the full and effective participation of the developing countries in the process of decision-making and in the resolution of world economic problems through strengthening of multilateralism aimed at promoting economic growth and development.

10. The Ministers called upon the developed countries to desist from taking any measures aimed at introducing new conditionalities in international economic cooperation, in particular those relating to trade and the environment, labour standards, ODA and technology transfer, and restrictions on market access for the commodities, manufactures and services of developing countries, particularly in the light of dwindling resources for development cooperation.

11. The Ministers reiterated the urgent need for a substantial expansion of official development assistance (ODA) in view of the declining levels of such assistance in recent years. In this regard, they strongly urged compliance with internationally agreed targets of ODA and commitments for new and additional resources, particularly the fulfillment by the donor countries who had failed to do so of the 0.7 percent of their GNP for developing countries by the year 2000 and commitments reflected in Agenda 21 and 0.15 per cent for the least developed countries in accordance with the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in September 1990. They also expressed concern over the reduction of ODA, particularly the contraction of ODA in real terms for the African and Least Developed Countries. They also stressed the need for qualitative improvements in ODA by the donor countries, inter alia, through reduced costs of repayment. They reiterated also the urgency of convening a United Nations Conference on the Financing of Development and welcomed the recommendation recently made in this regard by the Secretary-General, contained in his report on an Agenda for Development.

12. The Ministers expressed their deep concern over the chronic financial situation of the United Nations due to the failure of Member States, in particular some major contributors to comply with their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. Its magnitude is unprecedented and have virtually left the Organization teetering on the brink of insolvency and therefore represents the most acute threat to multilateral cooperation for development, it has also resulted in the delay of the reimbursement of the troop contributing countries, particularly those of the developing countries.

13. The Ministers reaffirmed the legal obligation of Member States to bear the expense of the Organization in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the requirements to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time and without conditions. While recognizing the need to extend sympathetic understanding to those that are temporarily unable to meet their financial obligations as a consequence of genuine economic difficulties, in all other cases, the Ministers appealed to members of the United Nations, in particular some major contributors, to exert every effort to pay all their dues unconditionally, in full and on time.

14. The Ministers reaffirmed that the principle of the "capacity to pay" is fundamental in the assessment of the Member States contributions to the United Nations. The Ministers further stressed that the developing countries should not be assessed a rate higher than the capacity to pay as a result of any adjustments in the scale. The Ministers noted that the current floor assessment has resulted in a serious departure from the principle of the capacity to pay for a large number of small member states from developing countries. They urged the 51st session of the General Assembly to lower the floor rate and to give due consideration to the difficulties of LDCs and other developing countries.

15. The Ministers also reaffirmed that the principle contained in the special scale of assessments established in resolution 3101 (XXVIII) for the apportionment of the costs of

peacekeeping operations must be adopted on a permanent basis. In this regard, they stressed that the scale for the financing of these operations must clearly reflect the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council and economic situation faced by other countries or groups of countries, particularly developing countries. The Ministers further stressed that the establishment of a ceiling and a floor for the Permanent Members of the Security Council is totally unacceptable.

16. The Ministers expressed concern at the continuing financial cutbacks to an already severely limited programme budget of the United Nations which has continued to threatened the very functioning of the United Nations and would adversely affect the Organization's capability to implement fully the programmes and activities which Member States have entrusted to it, particularly in the field of international and regional cooperation for development. In this regard, the Ministers stressed the need for the reform process of the United Nations, to strengthen, rather than weaken the implementation of all approved programmes and activities and related secretariat support structures.

17. The Ministers reaffirmed the priorities of the Group of 77 and China in the work of the Organization which are based on the principles of peace, development, equality and justice. The Ministers reiterated that development should remain high on the agenda of the international community and an integral part for the work of the United Nations System.

18. The Ministers acknowledged, with appreciation the initiatives of the Secretary-General and Secretariat aimed at boosting international cooperation for economic and social development in spite of the difficult circumstances and the deep financial constraint. In this regard, they expressed their concern in the decline of resources devoted to that end. The Ministers reiterated their support for the international civil service and the need to improve the conditions of service so that the United Nations can attract and maintain the best staff at the service of the whole international community on the widest possible geographical representation and on gender balance and equity.

19. The Ministers expressed the urgent need for the international community to call upon certain developed countries to immediately eliminate laws and regulations with adverse extra-territorial impacts and other forms of coercive economic measures against developing countries. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, inter-alia, sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, but also severely menace the freedom of trade and investment, which are also spelled out in many international legal instruments, including the principles establishing the World Trade Organization.

20. The Ministers reaffirmed that in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world it is essential to revitalize the dialogue between the developed and developing countries to strengthen global cooperation for development based on mutual benefit and shared

responsibilities. They further reaffirmed that the international community must accept the imperative needs for global partnership if peace and prosperity are to be effectively advanced.

21. The Ministers underlined that the General Assembly resolution 50/122 entitled "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership", could serve as an essential mechanism to further strengthen the efforts of the international community in implementing the agreed commitments and outcomes of the major United Nations conferences as well as in implementing relevant major United Nations resolutions. The dialogue could also serve as a mechanism to discuss emerging and urgent issues relevant to the strengthening of global partnership for development. In this respect, the Ministers stressed the importance of achieving a successful conclusion to the forthcoming first high-level dialogue on the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications, as envisaged in that resolution.

22. The Ministers stressed the critical importance of effective follow-up to landmark UN conferences and summits held since 1990, namely the World Summit for Children, the Second United Nations Conference of the Least Developed Countries, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. The commitments, recommendations and measures agreed to at those conferences must be implemented as soon as possible. In this regard, it is especially important to fully honour the commitments pertaining to the financing of actions envisaged in the conferences, as well as establishing effective institutional mechanisms for follow-up action. In regard to the latter aspect, the Ministers welcomed the adoption of resolution 1996/39 by the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council which will contribute to the United Nations system's ability to implement the decisions taken at the Conferences.

23. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to negotiate an action-oriented Agenda for Development which responds to the urgent demands for international cooperation for development, restore the imperative of development as a central concern in the international agenda, and strengthen the role and performance of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. An Agenda for Development should contain specific, concrete and pragmatic proposal which could be translated into action and could be operationalized, based on the global priorities set by the Plans of Action of the UN major conferences and summits. In this regard, they noted the status of negotiations on the Agenda and supported the General Assembly decision 50/45 that the Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, should continue its work in the 51st session of the Assembly, with a view to concluding its work on the elaboration of the Agenda as soon as possible. They urged all other Members States to commit themselves to make every effort to

continue working together in order to achieve a meaningful Agenda for Development. The Ministers stressed the importance that, during the intersessional period until the next session of the Working Group, the document on an Agenda for Development could benefit from an appropriate analysis and sustantive inputs provided by the South Centre.

24. The Ministers observed that while environmental problems of developed countries are associated with unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, those afflicting developing countries are, to a large extent, the results from poverty and underdevelopment and of their technical and financial limitations. They stressed the need for prompt and full implementation of all their commitments and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which have more relevance today than ever before. In this regard, they stressed that such implementation should not contradict the right of developing countries to benefit fully from the utilization of their resources which are vital for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. They expressed grave concern, in particular that four years, after the UNCED, the provision of new and additional financial resources, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms, scientific and technical cooperation and the appropriate dissemination of information have not materialized. They pointed out that the existing Global Environment Facility (GEF) resources are far from being adequate. In this context, they also urgently called on the international community, particularly the developed countries, to fulfill all their commitments contained in Agenda 21, including of the major conventions arising from the UNCED process. They also emphasized that the forthcoming Special Session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 should provide a unique opportunity for the international community to analyze the main obstacles hindering the effective implementation of Agenda 21 and put forward concrete proposals to address these issues, to ensure that "the new global partnership" for sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, particularly the developing countries, as envisaged at the Rio Summit, shall be transformed into reality as soon as possible.

25. The Ministers reaffirmed the urgency to assert the required political will to ensure an open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system with the aim of achieving the complete integration of the developing countries into the world economy and the new international trading system. They reiterated the need for full implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement and also called upon Member States, especially the developed countries, to implement fully the commitments agreed upon in the Final Act, including measures to mitigate adverse consequences on the developing countries. In this regard, the Ministers expressed the importance of the First Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held in Singapore in December, 1996. They also stressed that the Final Act confers special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the net food importing countries. They further rejected the use of disguised protectionist measures in the form of new concepts seeking to link domestic standards relating to environment, labor laws, and other issues,

through the application of arbitrary trade measures and bilateral pressures against developing countries. They also emphasized the importance of ensuring the universality of the World Trade Organization and, in this context called for expedition in accession process of applying developing countries that are not members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. They furthermore underscored that in the review of the application for membership no political consideration should be invoked to impede accession of the developing countries.

26. The Ministers expressed grave concern at the continuing adverse external economic environment for development characterized by, inter alia, increased protectionist tendencies in and unilateral coercive actions by the developed countries.

27. The Ministers expressed their concern over attempts to overload the agenda of the nascent World Trade Organization, as it could adversely affect the carefully balanced package of rights and obligations negotiated in the context of the Uruguay Round agreements. The Ministers cautioned that the introduction of environmental labeling or social clauses in the international trade regime would have a negative impact on economic growth and development, and would impose an unjustifiable economic and social burden on the developing countries. They underscored that the essential priority should be the implementation and fulfillment of these agreements and the adoption of measures to mitigate adverse consequences on the developing countries. The Ministers underlined that UNCTAD should continue to facilitate the integration of developing countries in the international trading system in a complementary manner with the World Trade Organization and to promote development through trade and investment.

28. The Ministers regretted that despite the adoption of several approaches undertaken over the past decade by the international community, the debt crisis continues to persist as one of the main constraints for the development of developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and for those at the lower, lower-middle and middle-income levels. They reiterated the urgent need for the international community, particularly the creditor countries and international financial institutions to adopt an effective, comprehensive and equitable, once-and-for-all development oriented and durable solution to the debt problem of the developing countries, including debt reduction and increased grants and concessional financial flows, in particular for the least developed countries and Africa. They stressed the urgency for the Joint IMF and World Bank meeting in October 1996 to produce a definitive action in addressing effectively the multilateral debts of developing countries. At the same time, they also stressed that structural adjustment policies must not divert resources away from social priorities in debtor countries.

29. The Ministers noted that the funding of multilateral financial institutions through their various concessional mechanism have proved insufficient against the requirements of development. They called upon the donor developed countries to increase substantially the capital base of the World Bank and the IMF and to meet their commitments under the eleventh

replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA). The Ministers also called on the developed countries to increase resources for the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) and the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) and expressed their support for the transformation of the ESAF into a permanent IMF facility.

30. The Ministers urged the international community to reaffirm its commitment to seek lasting solutions to the severe challenges facing the African continent with special attention to, among others, regional and subregional cooperation and integration, durable solution to Africa's external debt problem, diversification of African economies, more access to trade and market opportunities, resource flows, and transfer of technology. The Ministers welcomed the Mid-Term Review of the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) at which Africa and the international community renewed their commitment to and adopted a set of recommendations on a new measures aimed at giving further impetus to the implementation of the New Agenda in the spirit of partnership. The mid-term review acknowledged positive changes that are taken place in the region during the last few years. This, notwithstanding, the socio-economic situation in Africa remained critical and to consolidate the positive achievements it is necessary for the international community to continue to support Africa's efforts through he provision of new and additional resources and by ensuring a favourable external economic environment. The Ministers confirmed that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa should be a complement to UN-NADAF which could contribute to its implementation.

31. The Ministers urged the full and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the strengthening of the role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), taking into account the necessity for the Centre to focus on well-defined and thoroughly-developed objectives and strategic issues. They reaffirmed their commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as provided for in international instruments. In this regard, they recognize the particular needs of women, children and youth for safe, healthy and secure living conditions. To this end, the Ministers pledged their support for the successful implementation of the Habitat Agenda and its Plan of Action. Regarding the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, they fully recognized the contribution of the regional and national action plans prepared for this Conference. The Ministers expressed satisfaction at the leading role played by the Group of 77 and China in the elaboration and adoption of the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat II Agenda. They commended the Chairmen of New York and Nairobi Chapters for the outstanding contributions of the Group of 77 and China to the Habitat II Conference.

32. The Ministers expressed strong support for the World Food Summit to be held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, from 13 to 17 November 1996. They attach great importance to this event since it is the first time that the world leaders will meet to debate and renew their political commitment to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and address the issue of food security

for all peoples, through the adoption of policies and actions at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. Despite important decisions adopted at the World Food Conference in 1974, nearly 800 million men, women and children, particularly in the developing countries, suffer from hunger and chronic malnutrition, and 200 million children under the age of 5 suffer from acute protein deficiencies. Thus, they urged Governments attending the Summit to adopt policies and concrete measures to avert this grave situation in order to prevent social and humanitarian crisis in the near future.

33. The Ministers fully recognized that people's health is central to economic and social development. Not only are people the prime movers in that process, but also without promoting and protecting their health, there is no hope of achieving development objectives. The Ministers urged that within the nations most affected by poverty and disease, and especially by the new and emerging diseases, there is need for renewed efforts by development partners in investing in the agenda for health for all, as promoted by WHO. In a growing climate of globalization, the health of one part of the world affects the other, and it becomes increasingly necessary to work in partnership to invest in the health of the world's population.

34. The Ministers stressed the fact that 1996 is the International Year for Eradication of Poverty and that the General Assembly declared the Years from 1997 to 2006 as the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed that the goal of eradicating poverty in the world is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative which can only be achieved through a multidimensional and integrated approach. They also emphasized that the commitments agreed at the World Summit for Social Development should be fully implemented. To this end they look forward to the Special Session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 which will review and appraise the outcome of the Summit, with a view to considering further initiatives on the eradication of poverty.

35. The Ministers recognized the need to focus international efforts and policies to address the root causes of poverty and to provide for the basic needs of all. These efforts should include the elimination of hunger and malnutrition; the provision of food security, education, employment and livelihood, primary health care services, safe drinking water and sanitation, and adequate shelter; and participation in social and cultural life. The Ministers also recognize that the femenization of poverty has become a significant problem, special priority will be given to the needs and rights of women and children, who often bear the greatest burden of poverty, and to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and persons.

36. The Ministers recognized that education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. The Ministers urged the international community to implement the relevant recommendations of all the international conferences concerning the question of education with the aim of eradicating illiteracy all over the world.

37. The Ministers also recognized that non-discriminatory education without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age or disability would benefit all and thus ultimately contribute to more equal relationships between women and men. Literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering of women to participate in decision making in societies.

38. The Ministers recall their commitment to achieve the Universal Ratification on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the universal signing of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and its Plan of Action, as well as their effective implementation.

39. The Ministers emphasized the importance to prevent and eliminate all forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls.

40. The Ministers recognize the need to develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process;

41. The Ministers looked forward to due consideration by the General Assembly at its 51st session of the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, on the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security.

42. The Ministers fully recognize that the new forms of criminal activities of international drug trafficking organizations call for enhanced international cooperation as well as a renewal of the international commitment to fight against these menaces, and require the formulation of new strategies, approaches and objectives that, respectful of the sovereignty of States, can deal more effectively with the international operations of those involved in the illegal traffic of drugs and arms, the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals, and money laundering through financial and non-financial operations. In order to promote international cooperation to deal with this critical questions, the Ministers fully support the convening of a Special Session of the General Assembly on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

43. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the contributions of the Non-Governmental Organizations to the work of the United Nations, and look forward to the examination by the General Assembly, at its fifty-first session, of the question of the participation of NGOs in all areas of work of the United Nations in the light of the experience gained through the arrangements for consultation between the non-governmental organizations and the Economic and Social Council.

44. The Ministers reaffirmed the vital importance of strengthening and revitalizing the United Nations system as a means of enhancing international economic cooperation. In this regard, they recognized the importance of the deliberations of the High-Level Working Group on

Strengthening of the United Nations system, particularly with regard to the General Assembly and the Secretariat, as well as the significance of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/227 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. They emphasized the urgency of the prompt and full implementation of its provisions relating to increasing resources for operational activities for development; the establishment of new funding modalities; the reaffirmation of the distinct roles of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic and social fields; the need for enhancing the role to the General Assembly in policy making; making the substantive session of Economic and Social Council more focused and action-oriented; and enhancing the annual policy dialogue in order to ensure a full exchange of views between the U.N. system and the Bretton Woods Institutions. The overall objective of any restructuring and revitalization should be to place the issue of development at the forefront of the agenda of the United Nations.

45. The Ministers congratulated the Chairman for his effective coordination and harmonization of the views of the Group in the deliberations and negotiations at the different working groups of the General Assembly particularly those dealing with the further revitalization and restructuring of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the UN financial crisis, elaboration of an Agenda for Development and the strengthening of the United Nations system. They reiterated their commitment to continue cooperating with other regional groups to pursue the process of reform and revitalization of the United Nations.

46. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the promotion of development of various United Nations institutions, programmes, funds and specialized agencies that serve the development objectives of developing countries. To this end, they strongly reaffirmed their commitment to support and strengthen the role of the United Nations system in the field of development by enabling relevant institutions, particularly UNDP, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNIDO, FAO, UNESCO and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, to continue playing their leading roles in their respective fields of competence.

47. The Ministers stressed that enhancing collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions requires full and effective participation of developing countries in the decision making processes of these institutions. They also underline that policy dialogue at the intergovernmental level on global macroeconomic policy issues should be an important element in promoting coherence, while encouraging a plurality of analyses and views, on issues related to sustained economic growth and development. The Ministers emphasized that such collaboration should be based on the principles of neutrality and non-conditionality. They underscored that new mechanisms of cooperation between the Bretton Woods Institutions and other bodies of the United Nations system through, inter alia, participation in relevant meetings, information gathering, information exchange, research and policy analysis should be encouraged and pursued on a systematic basis. The multilateral financial institutions and the World Trade Organization should be invited to prepare reports and studies on relevant themes such as multilateral external debt, challenges and opportunities of global financial integration, financing for development and

functioning of the multilateral trading system, in order to enhance discussions at the United Nations General Assembly and at the Economic and Social Council.

48. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of UNCTAD IX which reaffirmed UNCTAD's mandate as the principal organ of the United Nations General Assembly and the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. As a universal forum in the service of the development, UNCTAD is well-placed to contribute to new and emerging issues, such as investment and enterprise, while continuing to deal with persistent problems. The Ministers, therefore, reaffirmed their strong commitment to strengthen UNCTAD and urged the international community to provide UNCTAD with the political and financial support to enable it to fully discharge its mandate. The Ministers welcomed the mandate given to UNCTAD to identify and analyze implications for development of issues relevant to a possible multilateral framework on investment, taking into account the interests of the developing countries. The Ministers also stressed the need for UNCTAD to continue its activities regarding Small Island Developing States and other small vulnerable economies as mandated by relevant General Assembly resolutions and the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

49. The Ministers reaffirmed the continued urgency to promote industrialization as a dynamic instrument essential to the rapid economic and social development of developing countries, contributing to the eradication of poverty and the creation of productive employment. They emphasized that in a globalized world economy with wide-ranging implications for the prospects of economic growth and development of the developing countries, the strengthening of their industrial base, in particular in African and the least developed countries, has become imperative. The role of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has therefore assumed greater relevance and importance. They underscored the role of UNIDO as an independent specialized agency with a central coordinating role within the United Nations system in the field of industrial development. They noted with satisfaction the completion of the reform process undertaken successfully by UNIDO which has enhanced its effectiveness as a global forum for supporting and promoting industrial development and a provider of specialized technical cooperation services. The Ministers reiterated their strong commitment to strengthen and support UNIDO in exercising fully its development mandate, and urged this organization to facilitate better access to its work for those developing countries who are not members.

50. The Ministers recognized sub-regional and regional economic cooperation as an important means of expanding trade and investment opportunities as well as the transfer of technology. They stressed the need for a strong commitment by the international community to pursue regional economic cooperation within the framework of an open, equitable, non-discriminatory and rule-based multilateral trading system. In this regard, the Ministers noted that the regional economic commissions provide a valuable forum and mechanism to promote and strengthen regional cooperation. The regional economic commissions should enhance regional cooperation

between their member states in economic, social and related activities and strengthen the relationships in these areas both among themselves and with other countries of the world. They resolved to strengthen the regional economic commissions, which they recognized as valuable development oriented focal points of the U.N. system at the regional level and in assisting countries, in particular the smaller economies of the regions, in the implementation of the recommendations of major conferences on development.

51. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen South-South cooperation and reiterated their convictions that it constitutes an integral and essential part of the efforts of the developing countries to promote economic growth, increase technological capacities and accelerate development. In this regard new political and economic realities call for a greater partnership for pursuing new opportunities for strengthening South-South cooperation.

52. While noting that there has been an increased interest and willingness to strengthen South-South cooperation, the Ministers asserted that further efforts were needed to ensure that its goals were materialized. In this respect, the Ministers noted the importance of establishing national focal points to coordinate the activities of South-South cooperation at the national level. The Ministers reiterated their convictions that South-South cooperation should be promoted by sharing development experiences among developing countries.

53. The Ministers recognized the importance of the great role and activities of the South Centre and reiterated their support for the Centre. In this regard, they welcomed the entry into force of the Agreement to Establish the Center and invited all members of the Group who had not done so to consider acceding this Agreement. They encouraged likewise the South Centre to strengthen further its working relationship, collaboration and its presence at the United Nations with a view to supporting the Group of 77. The Ministers also invited all Members of the Group of 77 and China to support financially the Centre with the goal of reaching the target for the capital fund entirely with the contributions from the South in order to enable the Centre to fulfill efficiently its mandate.

54. The Ministers welcomed the implementation of the decision by the Non-Aligned Summit in Cartagena on 18-20 October 1995 to establish a Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation in Indonesia.

55. The Ministers underlined the vital role of energy and energy efficiency, particularly for sustained economic growth and development of developing countries and, encouraged the members of the Group to enhance their cooperation in this field through, inter alia, joint investments and projects, in all sources of energy including in the area of conventional, non-conventional and renewable energy, in the context of South South cooperation. In this connection, they called upon the developed countries and the Multilateral Financial Institutions to support such activities by the provision of financial, technical and technological resources.

56. The Ministers reaffirmed that the General System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) constitutes an important element to further expand trade liberalization and inter-regional cooperation among developing countries. In this regard, the Ministers expressed their hope that the Second Negotiations on the GSTP could be concluded this year. The Ministers stressed the importance for negotiations in the GSTP to aim at widening its scope as envisaged in the agreement.

57. The Ministers stressed that ECDC/TCDC has matured into an integral aspect of the historical process of international cooperation for development. They reiterated that ECDC provides a natural bridge for the effective participation of the developing countries in the global economy. They underlined the importance of implementing a more strategic focus for TCDC and for selecting priority issues as stipulated in the New Directions for TCDC, adopted by General Assembly resolution 50/199, as a means for harnessing the significant capacities that exist in the developing world. In this regard, there is a need to effect a closer operational integration between TCDC and ECDC. They therefore underlined the importance for the harmonization of the Action Programme on Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Caracas Programme of Action (CPA). The Ministers appreciated the support provided by UNDP/the Special Unit for TCDC to the Office of the Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York and encouraged UNDP/and its Special Unit for TCDC to continue and expand this cooperation with the Group of 77 for the benefit of all developing countries.

58. The Ministers approved the report of the 11th Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) presented in accordance with the guidelines for the utilization of PGTF, and approved its recommendations. They expressed satisfaction with the results achieved by PGTF and agreed to explore ways and means to expand its resources.

59. The Ministers congratulated the Third World Network (TWN), the second recipient of the G-77/UNDP award on ECDC/TCDC, for its contribution to the advancement of South-South Cooperation and its valuable support to the Group of 77 at various United Nations Centres.

60. The Ministers also welcomed the outcome of the Round Table held in New York on 25th September 1996 and called on the Chairman to undertake specific measures to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of the Group of 77 and China and report to the 21st Ministerial Meeting on this matter, including proposals on the recommendations made by the Round Table.

61. The Ministers commended the Chairmen of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement on their coordination and cooperation through the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement (JCC), on the various fields of activities.

62. The Ministers expressed their concern at the stalled peace process in the Middle East and urgently called for international support to reactivate and complete the peace process from the point it was stopped at, emphasizing the necessity to respect all agreements, guarantees and

commitments reached during previous stage of the peace talks. They also reaffirmed their support to the Palestinian people in their efforts to achieve their inalienable rights, including their right to establish an independent state on their national soil, including Jerusalem. They reaffirmed further the permanent responsibility of the United Nations in dealing with the question of Palestine. At the same time, the Ministers reaffirmed their support for the peace process initiated at the Peace Conference on the Middle East held in Madrid which aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, the Ministers called on Israel to comply with all United Nations resolutions to put an end to its occupation of all Palestinian and other Arab territories including the Syrian Golan and South Lebanon. They reemphasized the need for international assistance to support Palestinian development efforts in the economic and social fields in their pursuit of sustainable development, and called on the international donor community to deliver the financial assistance pledged to the Palestinian Authority.

63. The Ministers called on the international community to provide special economic assistance in support of consolidation of the peace process and economic recovery of Angola and other developing countries that are facing similar problems, taking into account the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/182.

64. The Ministers recognized that although natural disasters are universal, the occurrence of these phenomena in developing countries often caused dramatic devastation in terms of human lives, property and infrastructure and that some of these phenomena are likely to be exacerbated by climate change, to the further detriment of the vulnerable developing countries. They stressed the need for concrete measures to reduce the vulnerability of these societies to natural disasters, and urged the international community to give adequate support, both financially and technically, to the efforts of the developing countries in terms of enhancing national capacities to cope with these natural phenomena. In this regard, they reaffirmed their support to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a distinct framework for action which facilitates, among others, the effective integration of disaster reduction into sustainable development planning.

65. The Ministers noted with interest the ongoing process of ratification of the Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, and expressed the hope that the Convention will enter into force before the end of 1996. In this respect, they expressed their deep concern regarding the status of the negotiations on the mandate, role and functions of the Global Mechanism, which shall mobilize and channel the resources to the affected developing countries. The Ministers urged the International Community, particularly the developed countries, to give their financial and technical support to the implementation of the Convention showing their firm political will and commitment in establishing sustainable human resources development schemes in those areas that, because of land degradation processes, are stricken today by absolute poverty and famine, and those areas

vulnerable to drought and/or desertification where, if no urgent measures are taken today, will very soon enlarge the domains of poverty, famine, social and environmental degradation. The Ministers welcomed also the offer made by the Government of Italy and the FAO to host the First Session of the Conference of the Parties in Rome in 1997.

66. The Ministers noted the status of deliberations and negotiations in the various ad hoc working groups of the General Assembly dealing with the reform and the revitalization of the United Nations during the Fiftieth Session of the Assembly and expressed their resolve to exert every effort to bring the intergovernmental deliberations and negotiations to an expeditious and successful conclusion.

67. The Ministers welcomed the offer made by the Government of Costa Rica to host, in January 1997, a South-South Conference on Finance, Trade and Investment, with the primary focus on identifying innovative strategies for accelerating the pace of economic and financial cooperation among developing countries. In this context, the San Jose Conference will accelerate the implementation of the Caracas Programme of Action keeping in mind the new realities of the developing world. They also expressed the hope that this conference will draw up a new concrete plan of action that would enable developing countries' governments, the private sector, the business community, and other civil society organizations involved in promoting South-South cooperation to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities which are presented by globalization and economic liberalization.

68. The Ministers looked forward to the South-South Conference on Finance, Trade and Investment in San Jose, Costa Rica as a welcome and timely opportunity to further solidify the views and positions of the Group of 77 and China on outstanding issues before the General Assembly as well as other relevant multilateral fora.

69. The Ministers pledged to continue working together in a more cohesive and harmonious manner with a view to enhancing coordination and interaction of the Chapters of the Group of 77 and China in all relevant multilateral fora. They are committed to harmonize their efforts, to bring greater coherence and further consolidate their unity towards a better interaction among developing countries. In this spirit, they resolved to continue their concerted effort to help bring about a more equitable, prosperous and secure world in which all nations, large and small, weak and powerful, share in the blessings of peace, development and cooperation.